

Request for Proposal

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Release Date: 6/4/2021

Response Due: 7/2/2021

PROJECT DETAILS

Assessment of Dairy Farms Interested in Producing Specialty Cheese Quality Milk

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC), hosted by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets seeks a contractor to understand the level of interest from dairy farmers, located generally in central to southern Vermont and northern Massachusetts, in producing milk specifically for specialty cheese production. This work will include quantifying potential annual fluid milk production that could be diverted into the specialty processing supply chain and farmer willingness to change farm production strategies.

Agency/Department:

Name: Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets

Contact: Laura Ginsburg

Address: 116 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620

Contact Phone: 802-522-2252

Contact E-mail: laura.ginsburg@vermont.gov

TIMELINE*

Release Date: 6/4/2021

Responses Due: 7/2/2021

Contract Start Date: 8/1/2021

Contract End Date: 4/30/2022

**to be finalized after proposals are received and contractor selected*

BUDGET

Maximum budget for project: \$15,000



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OTHER BUDGET COMMENTS / RESTRICTIONS / INCENTIVES

None.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Vermont dairy processors create a plethora of national and international award-winning products, from cheese to ice cream to caramel. These businesses, while small in scale compared to the average U.S. dairy processors, are able to capitalize on their talent, product lines, and consumer interest in purchasing products that meet their values. Cheesemakers and other value-added processors represent a diverse array of businesses who share a strong work ethic, innovative approaches, and connection to rural communities. Consumers are increasingly attracted to specialty dairy products made by small companies and regional producers are well-positioned to take advantage of this growing market share. With declining income from commodity milk production, the further development and growth of the specialty products market may provide an attractive alternative for dairy producers who may be willing to shift farm strategies to sell milk specifically to specialty cheese processors that can provide a higher and more consistent milk check. The Vermont Dairy Promotion Council approximated that annual sales of Vermont dairy and processed products is \$1.3 billion annually, with half coming from cheese sales alone.

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center is hosted at the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFM).

STATEMENT OF WORK

The goal of this work is to generate a list of current dairy farmers, generally located in central to southern Vermont and northern Massachusetts, who may be interested or are ready to sell their milk to a specialty cheese processor. Eligible dairy farmers for consideration shall milk no more than 200 cows. The contractor may propose a number of identification and recruitment strategies, including but not limited to: farmer survey, direct connection, and snowball sampling method. Contractor will be responsible for the following:

1. Develop understanding of specialty cheese milk qualities
 - a. Contractor will work with NE-DBIC identified cheesemakers and Vermont Cheese Council to understand their specific needs when sourcing milk, including cost of raw milk transportation, and will use this information to develop the tool used to gather information from farmers

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- b. Using the information gathered from cheesemakers, contractor will clearly identify a recruitment zone
2. Farmer identification and contact
 - a. Contractor, with support as needed from the NE-DBIC, VAAFM, and other dairy farm organizations, will identify and contact eligible farm businesses in the recruitment zone
3. Information gathering
 - a. Contractor will collect information from interested farmers about current production practices (full list to be developed in collaboration with NE-DBIC), milk quality, interest in modifying production practices to meet the needs of specialty cheese makers, milk pay price needed, and any other concerns regarding this new market opportunity such as purchase and pay price commitments
4. Synthesis and reporting
 - a. Contractor will develop a final report that includes synthesized data about overall interest, potential milk production levels, locations of farms, farmer contact information, and concerns in addition to other data collected

PERFORMANCE MEASURES & DELIVERABLES

- ☐ Contractor will conduct a kickoff planning meeting with NE-DBIC staff.
- ☐ Contractor will conduct a regular meeting with NE-DBIC staff to provide project updates.
- ☐ Contractor will provide an outline of specific activities in their proposal, which will be finalized at the time of contract development.
- ☐ Contractor will successfully identify opportunities in specialty cheese quality milk production and will be able to effectively convey those opportunities to potential interested producers.
- ☐ Contractor will provide an outline of deliverables and performance metrics associated with each activity in their proposal, which will be finalized at the time of contract development.
- ☐ Upon completion of the research, contractor will provide a final report.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The following materials must be submitted via email to laura.ginsburg@vermont.gov no later than midnight on 7/2/21 for consideration. Materials must be submitted via a single pdf or single clickable link to a full online package.

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1. **Project approach, background, and experience.** Provide a history of your work and a list of current and/or notable clients. Bids that include descriptions of relevant prior experience with this kind of work will be prioritized.
2. **Full resumes or CVs of project team leader and all other team members with a description of their role in the project**
3. **Proposed work plan, activities, associated deliverables, reporting measures, and timeline.**
4. **Project budget:** Please submit a budget, not to exceed \$15,000, that is both realistic and reasonable to complete the scope of services. Budget must tie specific activities to deliverables, with clear cost associated with each component of the proposal. Note: State of Vermont contracts are paid based on completion and approval of deliverables. Proposals should: include all relevant costs required to complete the work as detailed above, note any travel requirements, and include necessary costs to meet insurance requirements of State of Vermont, Standard Attachment C.
5. **A Certificate of Insurance** which meets the criteria as outlined in [Attachment C](#).
6. A **W9** signed within the last 6 months.
7. Proof of current **SAM.gov** registration, including the organization's **DUNS number**.